Rustam Orazaliyev

ESL 222-2

Research paper final draft

Keys Stahl

August 11, 2011

Benefits and disadvantages of college sports

Sport is one of the most popular types of entertainment people ever invented and nowadays sport is an integral part of Americans’ lives. From very young ages, children start practicing sports. Step by step their skills improve and children get honor from representing their elementary school, junior high and high school, and finally college. After years of practicing, children turn into well-prepared athletes willing to work hard to become even better and having ability to show their excellent skills in sport events, and people are eager to pay for the chance to see them in action. As a result, the United States has produced excellent athletes without actual government investment in sport, organizations inside and outside universities that arrange intercollegiate competitions earn billions of dollars and college athletes get considerable support from the universities they represent. However, everything is not as ideal as it seems to be, and usually the main protagonists of this show, universities and athletes, suffer because of college sports.

Without doubt, the positive influence of college athletics must be considered. Despite the lack of sport organizations, the USA is always represented by athletes of exceptional class. Great credit for this lies on university sport programs which prepare excellent sportsmen. According to Thomas Rosandich’s *Collegiate Sports Programs: A Comparative Analysis*, “the intercollegiate sport competition and training facilities at most large American universities rival that of even the best equipped national sport programs or sport clubs in other nations” (par. 8). Obviously, the huge degree of university support to sport programs makes colleges the best places to develop talented athletes, the majority of whom represent their own country and the fact that, every year many students become professional athletes, just proves the efficiency of college athletic programs. Rosandich writes, “There were a total of 35 college teams that last year [2001] had four or more individuals on an NBA roster for a total of 211 NBA players” (par. 23). According to this information it is safe to say that universities are the main suppliers of future basketball stars. As a result, the importance of the position held by intercollegiate sports in hierarchy of athletic organizations within United States cannot be questioned.

In addition to the sport aspects, university athletic programs have big influence on the economic sector. Thereby, organizations establishing intercollegiate competitions earn an incredible amount of money. Sport broadcasts and revenue from matches’ attendance bring billions of dollars to organizations involved in college tournaments. As Pete DiPrimio writes in *Tribune Business News,* by NCAA Tournament TV contract NCAA will get $10.8 billion in 14 years and NCAA’s football analog, The Bowl Championship Series, gets $174.07 million for 5 matches (par. 5-6). Popularity of college sports is so great that organizations like NCAA couldn’t resist from the opportunity to make money. Universities also benefit because of their college programs. First of all, universities get good revenue from their athletic programs and this revenue not only covers expenses of some colleges but also makes a profit. DiPrimio writes that “Thanks to the Big Ten Network, UI had a surplus of $1.1 million. Purdue made $3.3 million” (par. 10). In addition to the profit, successful sport teams advertise their own university. University names begin to appear in the review of sports news in TV channels and in newspapers. During March Madness, college tournament involving basketball teams, a lot of people fill tournament brackets, try to guess the winner of every match, and it became so popular that even President Obama was involved in this action. For sure, all these contribute to the promotion of universities’ brands and grab attention of prospective students.

All universities involved in NCAA have revenue but not all of them have income. Actually, just few universities make money. According to DiPrimio, 206 out of 228 public universities involved in NCAA’s Division I have expenses higher than revenue they get (par. 9). As can be seen, just 10% of universities have positive income and this fact is not surprising because income varies according to the amount of played games, so teams which dropout at early stages simply are not able to make money. As a result, to make money, a university has to have a strong team. University athletic departments usually consist of several different programs, and while some of them are successful others can bankrupt department. A clear example of such a department is provided by journalist Michele Voepel in her blog. According to Voepel, the University of California, Berkeley, in 2009 had surplus of $7,026,078 thanks to its football team performance but at the same time other 11 sports men programs caused debt of $3,689,362 (revenue/expense figures). Since income depends on the performance of teams, a majority of universities are not able to earn money from their athletic programs because many have to lose and just a few actually win.

The importance of the performance of athletic teams for university sport programs is undeniable; therefore, colleges are eager to recruit the most talented athletes. In an interview with Robert Lipsyte, Dan Shanoff says that the most talented athletes get scholarships covering their tuition; they also get free “super food”, healthy nutrition with high amount of proteins assigned for athletes, and the best on-campus housing for free (par. 3-5). In such way it is obvious that, universities are willing to provide a lot of benefits to attract successful high school athletes. Colleges want to have successful athletic departments so much that they do not spare to spend millions of dollars on their own athletes in order to create ideal atmosphere for them. According to Voepel, a full scholarship provided by University of California, Berkeley is worth $24,793 for residents of California and $47,967 for nonresidents per semester (par. 1). All these benefits and support provided by university cause a lot of college athletes to forget about main purpose of universities; they forget about education.

Unfortunately, involvement in college athletic programs takes so much of students’ time that they are simply deprived of the chance to get full education. Athletes spend a lot of their time practicing in order to be in optimal form. In addition, they have to spend much time on playing official games and even more time for away games. Furthermore, away games force athletes to miss classes because majority of official games don’t take place on the weekend. All these circumstances certainly affect the academic performance of college athletes negatively. It is reasonable that James L. Shulman and William G. Bowen have discovered that students not involved in college sports have better academic records than their athlete-classmates do (Feezell par. 9). As a result, majority of those athletes who will not become professional sportsmen not only finish their sport carrier after graduation but they also sacrifice their academic performance and respectively lose chances to get high-paying jobs. Some people may argue that athletes’ poor performance in academic classes has nothing to do with their involvement in sport. However, athletes themselves agree with the fact that sport prevents them from doing academic work. According to the survey provided by Josephine Potuto and James O’Hanlon, 53% of interviewed athletes complain about the lack of time they spend on their academic studying and “Sixty-five per cent state they believe that it [their GPA] would be higher if they [student-athletes] had not participated in a varsity sport”(960). As a result, there is a direct connection between poor academic performance of student-athletes and their involvement in sport. Thus, college athletes are the main protagonists and main victims of intercollegiate sports.

In conclusion, college sports play a very important role in lives of Americans. College sport has already become breathtaking entertainment and a lot of organizations turn it in big business. Students attracted by all benefits provided to them give great shows and bring millions of dollars to their universities and organizations from sporting events. However, unfortunately, a majority of athletes neither become sport stars after graduation nor get a complete education. Therefore, sports administration and colleges should ask themselves, “Do we act honestly towards college athletes are we cheating them of the chance to get higher education?”

**Works Cited**

DiPrimio, Pete. “Is Paying College Athletes Worth the Cost?” *Washington: McClatchy - Tribune Information Services*, 2011. *ABI/INFORM Complete.* Web. 28 Jul. 2011.

Feezell, Randolph M. "The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values / Beer and Circus / Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University: A University President's Perspective." *Academe 87.5* (2001): 90-92. *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 26 Jul. 2011.

Potuto, Josephine R., and James O'Hanlon. "National Study of Student-Athletes regarding their Experiences as College Students." *College Student Journal* 41.4 (2007): 947-966. *PsycINFO.*Web. 28 Jul. 2011.

Rosandich, Thomas. "Collegiate Sports Programs: A Comparative Analysis." *Education* 122.3 (2002): 471-478. *ProQuest Research Library.*Web. 26 Jul. 2011.

Shanoff, Dan. Interview by Robert Lypsite. “Should College Athletes be paid?” *ESPN.com*. ESPN Internet Ventures, 2005. Web. 26 Jul. 2011. <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/page2/

story?page=shanoff/lipsyte/050316>.

Voepel, Mechelle. “Pay for Play: Cal.” *ESPN.com.* ESPN Internet Ventures, 2011. Web. 26 Jul. 2011. <<http://espn.go.com/ncaa/blog/_/name/college_sports/id/6765004>>.